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Ambassador To Moscow

While Dr. Ralph Bunche would have been our first choice to succeed Admiral Alan G. Kirk as U. S. Ambassador to Moscow, President Truman hardly can be said to have made a mistake in naming George F. Kennan as the replacement. A principal architect of this country's policy of "containment" with respect to Communist Russia and its satellites, Mr. Kennan speaks the Russian language and has made an exhaustive study of Russian affairs. It is presumed that the Senate will show the good sense to approve his nomination without delay.

In an anonymous article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947, signed "Mr. X", Admiral Kirk's prospective successor well said: "It is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."

Holding the line and hoping for the best, however, were not viewed by Mr. Kennan as the limits of American policy by any means. "It is entirely possible," he submitted, "for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international Communist movement, by which Russian policy is largely determined."

Relations between the United States and the Soviet regime in Russia inevitably have been influenced by the shifting attitude of our diplomatic personnel. As against an initial failure to recognize the true character of the Bolshevik uprising, more recent diplomatic relations have been handled with greater competence on the American side by W. Averell Harriman, Gen. Walter Bedell Smith and Admiral Kirk. Mr. Kennan is well qualified to follow in the footsteps of these former envoys.

The Ambassador to Moscow in November, 1917, was David R. Francis, who had been Governor and the outstanding Democratic leader of Missouri. He has been described by Samuel Harper, who was engaged by the State Department to brief the new emissary to Russia, as a "very blunt, outspoken American," whose "one apparent qualification for foreign service was the fact that he had been president of the St. Louis International Exposition of 1903."

In March of 1917, Ambassador Francis had recommended immediate U. S. recognition of the provisional government of Prince Lvoff. He refused to believe the Bolsheviks could retain the power they later seized and he recommended that no action whatever be taken by the United States until, with the Reds vanquished, the situation had righted itself. When informed that the Petrograd Soviet had named Lenin premier, the American Ambassador wrote: "Disgusting!—but the more ridiculous the situation, the more the need for a strong American presence."

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY CHIEF. President Truman congratulates Dr. Raymond B. Allen (right) in the White House after Allen was sworn in as director of the psychological strategy board. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Central Intelligence Agency director, is at the left of the picture made during the ceremony.

The views of this envoy were not shared by William C. Bullitt, then a young Philadelphia journalist who, working with the State Department, received a Soviet peace proposal in Moscow in March, 1919. "No government save a socialist government," Mr. Bullitt reported, "can be set up in Russia today except by foreign bayonets, and any government so set up will fall the moment such support is withdrawn." The recognition he then recommended was not to be extended until November, 1933.

Ironically, Mr. Bullitt, named by President Roosevelt as U. S. Ambassador to Moscow upon the resumption of relations, was to have his earlier enthusiasm for the Soviet regime destroyed by bitter disillusionment. Joseph E. Davies, who succeeded Ambassador Bullitt in January, 1937, often expressed the conviction that the Soviet leaders were honest and sincere.

Relations with Russia remained, on the whole, friendly throughout World War II. But by 1947, according to Vera Micheles Dean, it had become apparent that the United States and Russia remained "sharply divided by differences in their internal systems, by clashes at strategic points of the world, by Russia's fear of the atomic bomb and by our renewed fear of communism." If anything, the state of affairs existing between the United States and Russia is worse today, and an Ambassador of Mr. Kennan's exceptional qualifications obviously is needed to handle America's contacts with the Russians.